

Modern Slavery Bill coming

The Minister of Workplace Relations and Safety, Carmel Sepuloni, has [announced](#) the Government's intention to draft legislation to address modern slavery within the next six months.

The Government is working alongside business to deliver on its commitment to address modern slavery by introducing new legislation that requires organisations and businesses to be transparent about their operations and supply chains through a new public register.

Organisations with over \$20 million in revenue will be required to report and outline the actions they take to address exploitation risks in their operations and supply chains.

"We're taking action to address modern slavery and eliminate exploitation in our supply chains. It's vital we bring modern slavery practices out of the shadows and into the daylight so we can ensure workers are safe and treated with dignity," Carmel Sepuloni said.

"Since the pandemic, we've seen modern slavery balloon globally. The International Labour Organization and Walk Free now estimates that 50 million people are in modern slavery on any given day, compared to an estimated 40 million in 2016.

This proposed legislation and public register will be among the world's strongest reporting systems for tackling modern slavery.

"During consultation we heard clearly from business that this legislation is crucial. We already know some businesses are ensuring they don't have modern slavery in their supply chains, and this will help level the playing field.

"The changes will mean that conscious Kiwi consumers will have more transparency about the products and services they consume. World Vision estimates Kiwi households inadvertently pay an average of \$34 each week to industries whose products are implicated in modern slavery.

"We have commitments in our Free Trade Agreements with the United Kingdom and the EU to take steps to prevent modern slavery in our supply chains and promote responsible business conduct. A lack of action will be detrimental to our trading relationships.

"It's important we continue to bolster New Zealand's transparent and ethical reputation within our export markets and on the global stage. Now, more than ever, is the time to put steps into place to prevent these horrible practices from occurring.

"Our focus on larger organisations strikes an appropriate balance, by encouraging those most able to influence their more extensive supply chains, and not overburdening small businesses.

"Consultation on Modern Slavery Supply Chain reform was held last year, and we heard loud and clear the need for these changes. I would like to thank Rob Fyfe and the Modern Slavery Leadership Advisory Group for their hard work and commitment to this important issue.

“Broader reform to progress the other more complex components that were consulted upon remains a priority for this Government, including ‘due diligence’ and ‘take action’ responsibilities. I am committed to progressing this work for future decisions,” says Carmel Sepuloni.

The consultation draft (dated 18 May 2022) of Simon O’Connor’s [Modern Slavery Bill](#) (a Member’s Bill) is worth reviewing for the background it provides, particularly section 9, which prescribed the contents of a modern slavery statement that reporting entities would be expected to make.

Source: [Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz)

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